Civil Society İnnovation

Addendum #000003

to

The USAID Development Innovation Accelerator (DIA)
Broad Agency Announcement (BAA) for
Science, Technology, Innovation, and Partnership

Citizens and civil society organizations (CSOs) are having an increased impact on the way that societies operate. In some countries, they are key drivers of policy, providing new and fresh ideas to those in government and working together to solve shared challenges. In some places, non-governmental groups are working hand-in-hand with the media to increase transparency and strengthen democratic accountability. Activists and advocates in civil society engage citizens directly in an effort to give people a real voice in how they are governed. Rapid and dramatic advances in information and communications technology (ICT) are fundamentally changing how people in societies interact, citizen-to-citizen and citizen-to-government, in both positive and negative ways.

Yet as citizen voices have become more unified and amplified, there has been a backlash. Civil society organizations are under siege in many countries throughout the world. In recent years, autocratic regimes have implemented a variety of laws and regulations designed to decrease the scope of activities for civil society organizations at home, and limit their ability to receive fund activities. The backlash has been intense and is growing.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) has been among the largest donors focused on civil society development for decades. However, money and size alone will not suffice in promoting the advances civil society has made in some countries and curtailing the regressions in others. USAID is seeking new and established approaches to innovatively promote, strengthen, and connect CSOs in opened and closing spaces by fostering systems where groups can access techniques, tools, and technologies to address their most pressing issues, via regional physical and digital civil society centers or programs. In order to work on these approaches, USAID seeks partners with which to journey through the co-creation process. This process could potentially result in one or more programs that systematically enhance traditional civil society development assistance through use and scaling of new and/or proven approaches to address and harnessing opportunities for civil society development.

The Civil Society İnnovation program forms part of a wider partnership between USAID and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) focused on innovation, partnerships, and innovative financing mechanisms to source game-changing innovations with the potential to solve long-standing development challenges.

Accompanying this Addendum is an *illustrative* concept paper called "Digiso: the Hubs for Civil Society Impact + Innovation" intended to capture one approach to addressing civil society challenges and harnessing civil society opportunities. It is not intended to guide respondents' ideas/approaches, but rather to provide an example of one potential set of options.

For the purpose of this Addendum, civil society is defined broadly as the sector in society that gives voice to and advocates on behalf of citizens and their interests. This includes traditional NGOs, associations, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, unions or syndicates, as well as activists and social movements. Eventual partners might include organizations, networks, consortia, universities, businesses, technologists, foundations, governmental entities, etc. Note that USAID is not searching for partners whose primary interests lie in benefiting from activities resulting from the Civil Society İnnovation program.

For the purposes of this Addendum, USAID seeks co-creation partners which possess a number of the following experiences:
- connecting, strengthening, and/or scaling local and regional civil society networks
- curating large data and knowledge sets and managing communities of practice
- connecting disparate communities, *i.e.* academia, private sector, civil society
- addressing/harnessing civil society challenges/opportunities innovatively
- responding to threats intended to limit or control civil society
- connecting with experts in non-traditional and diverse sectors
- leading advocacy campaigns around civil society issues
- employing ICT tools appropriately and proportionately
- implementing adaptive and/or iterative programming
- managing successful peer-to-peer networks
- catalyzing new ideas effectively
- shepherding design processes

Expressions of Interest

Please submit an expression of interest that identifies your group's willingness to collaborate with the USAID Civil Society İnnovation program, describes your idea/approach for enhancing civil society, and highlights your group's value to the partnership.

Submitted expressions of interest will:
- not exceed 1000 words, excluding header and optional graphic
- contain a header with the following information, not included in word count:
    - Respondent Name/Group and Contact Information:
    - Response Title:
    - BAA Addendum Name/Number:
- contain one optional graphic smaller than an 8.5"x11" or A4 piece of paper, not included in word count
- be in .pdf, .docx, or .odf format

Criteria

The following criteria will be applied to all expressions of interest:

Idea/Approach: Soundness of your idea/approach, including appropriate evidence, to fostering systems that address civil society challenges and harness civil society opportunities.

Partnership Expectations and Value: Strengths of your group as a partner, including your ability to provide a financial, in-kind, or leveraged match at various stages of the process.

Process

Selection: USAID will review and select expressions of interest submitted in accordance with the guidelines and criteria set forth in this Addendum. USAID reserves the right to disregard any expressions of interest that do not meet the guidelines.

Stage 1: Selected groups will be invited to join the co-creation process in which will consist of a co-creation workshop in September or October, where USAID, partners, and selected groups will gather to collaboratively develop the program(s). This will result in one or more concept papers of 5-7 pages each, outlining the concrete programmatic plan, focus areas, goals, timelines, etc.

Stage 2: Final concept papers will be submitted to USAID's internal Review Board. Approved concept papers for programs will be further refined (co-design) and potentially implemented.

USAID is not obligated to issue a financial instrument or award as a result of this Addendum.

Response Date

Please submit your expression of interest in English to CivilSocietyInnovation@usaid.gov **no later than 11:59 pm EST, August 17, 2014**.